Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum 25 June 2025

Room 110, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, 23 Kildare Street

Attendees

EDAF Members (In-person)
Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, Niamh Smyth TD
Barry O'Brien (IBM)
Martina Fitzgerald (Scale Ireland)
Mike Conroy (ITAG)
Kieran McCorry (Microsoft Ireland)
Stephanie Anderson (Meta)
David Kilbride (Stripe)
Kathryn O'Donovan (Google)
Erik O'Donovan (Ibec)
Victor Timon (Digital Business Ireland)
Orla O'Keeffe (Failte Ireland)

EDAF Members (Online)
Terri O'Donovan (J&J)
Eoin Costello (Digital HQ & Dargan Institute)
Fiona Bourke (D/Taoiseach)
DC Cahalane (Sure Valley Ventures)
Kathrina Flynn (DETE)
Michelle Kiernan (DETE)

Officials (In-person)
Jean Carberry (DETE)
Ciaran Tully (DETE)
Valerie Rousselin (DETE)
Catherine Howard (IDA)
Ruairi O' Halínn (EI)
Gerry O'Grady (EI - LEOs Centre of Excellence)
Daire Traybor (NSAI)
Orla O'keeffe (Failte Ireland)

Introduction

Minister Smyth welcomed EDAF members.

She underlined the critical role of competitiveness to build resilience for our enterprise sector and to foster sustainable growth within an open economy like ours.

She highlighted the publication of the 2025 State of the Digital Decade Report. The latest result show that Ireland continues to perform well in certain areas with good progress on connectivity including in rural areas. While indicators for digitalisation of enterprise are within the EU average, we would like to see them progress at higher pace. The update of the National Digital Strategy will be an opportunity to further improve outreach to SMEs with lower levels of digital maturity.

Finally, she reminded the key role of EDAF in supporting the Department in shaping policy and welcomed an open discussion on EDAF's work programme and input to start sharing the update of the National Digital Strategy.

Review and update of EDAF work programme for the next 12 months, Jean Carberry

The work programme adopted in 2024 was reviewed going through the following workstreams: 1) Awareness raising, driving digitalisation and AI adoption in enterprise & outreach; 2) Leveraging European Digital Innovation Hubs; 3) Digital Inclusion, Skills, GovTech & Cybersecurity; 4) Technology, Regulatory & Digital Developments and Future Trends.

Suggestions from EDAF members focussed on accelerating the pace of work and ways of working. To achieve this, the following proposals were made:

- Modalities encouraging and delivering further collective views and advice from the advisory forum to opportunities and/or challenges in digital and AI facing enterprise or relevant to delivering the Programme for Government (PFG).
- Facilitating online thematic working groups between the in-person plenary meetings every quarter.

- Setting an online collaborative platform to share documents and foster collaboration through group discussions on specific topics.

Findings of 2025 annual report on the state of the Digital Decade, Valerie Rousselin

Ireland continues to perform well, remaining one of the best performers on digital skills and showing good progress on connectivity.

There is no room for complacency with respect to digitalisation of enterprise indicators:

- Although AI adoption in SMEs has progressed very well it remains within the EU average.
- Progress on shares of SMEs with at least basic digital intensity is slow.

Ireland remains a front runner in SMEs selling online and e-Commerce turnover.

The following actions were discussed with members to further support digital intensity and AI adoption:

- Joint awareness campaigns for digitalisation and AI adoption building on the Digital First Day event organised across the country on 16 November 2022
- Increasing attractiveness and conversion rates of existing Digital support programmes
- Strengthening enterprise training and lifelong learning in Digital and AI adoption
- Segmented approach to technological and AI adoption focussing on specific sectors

There was strong interest in these areas being further discussed in sub-groups over the coming year.

National Digital Strategy, Jean Carberry

D/T confirmed that the approach on the update of the NDS was currently in discussion with departments and that a consultation process would take place later in the year.

D/ETE is expecting the updated enterprise pillar of the new National Digital Strategy to follow the same framework as the current one, while integrating the AI strategy, with 3 main areas of focus 1) Driving Enterprise Adoption 2) Fostering an ecosystem for startups 3) Attracting inward investments.

EDAF Members shared initial views on the update of the NDS:

- The importance of the digital infrastructure as a prerequisite to any possible significant progress on wide digital adoption.
- Better reflect the wider focus on technology adoption in the title of the strategy
- The need to build on existing supports to increase their uptake by SMEs, including by simplifying their access to them.
- Regulatory competitiveness
- Improve availability of investments for start-ups to scale
- Adapt public sector guidelines on the use of AI to private sector

The next in person plenary meetings are scheduled on 10 September 2025 and 10 December 2025.

DETE AI and Digital Programmes – 28 July 2025